

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR FREDERICKA GREGORY
IN RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF MR. MIKLOS HARASZTI,
OSCE REPRESENTATIVE ON FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA
796TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
4 MARCH 2010**

Mr Chairman,

Canada warmly welcomes Mr. Haraszi back to the Permanent Council and wishes to thank him for his final address and report and for the superb work he has done as OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media these past six years.

Mr. Haraszi, you and your team have done a lot for the development and protection of free, independent and pluralistic media in the OSCE region. You will be remembered for your courage in speaking out on incidents that ran counter to OSCE commitments and standards. Your substantive and frank reports to the Permanent Council on key developments and trends were greatly valued and helpful.

We share the conclusions in Mr. Haraszi's Report that we are witnessing an unfortunate downward trend in media freedoms in some OSCE countries. In this context, we believe that international scrutiny and peer review will continue to remain indispensable for protecting the fate of human rights and fundamental freedoms in our region, including those of journalists and media workers. This is especially true when basic rights and freedoms are opposed or threaten by authorities through their use of libel and defamation, internet governance, or the use of harassment, intimidation or violent attacks against media workers and journalists.

With respect to the important OSCE peer review process and mechanisms, we note that a Canadian case is raised in Mr. Haraszi's Report to the Council. On this, law enforcement authorities in Toronto, where the vandalism of the newspaper office occurred, are currently investigating this incident and we will get back to the Office of the Freedom of the Media once we know more.

As well, we thank the Office for preparing the 2009 Yearbook assessing freedom of the media and highlighting cases in the OSCE region which is a very useful peer review tool, and covers well - as it should - all geographic regions from Vancouver to Vladivostok, because all of our countries must remain vigilant and committed to this important goal.

To conclude, we wish Mr. Haraszti all the very best in his future endeavours and wish to thank him for his contributions to the OSCE community and to one of the pillars of democracy. Proposed candidate for his successor, Ms Dunja Mijatovic (from Bosnia Herzegovina), will undoubtedly have big shoes to fill, but Canada and others will continue to lend their full support to this vital OSCE Institution.

Thank you.